

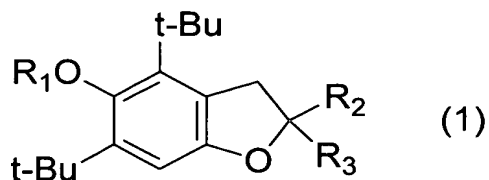
Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-7 (cancelled)

8. (Original) A method for ameliorating the vascular tone-regulating function of vascular endothelium, comprising administering to a patient in need thereof, an effective amount of a compound represented by formula (1):



wherein

R₁ represents a hydrogen atom or an acyl or arylalkyloxycarbonyl group;

R₂ and R₃ are identical or different and represent an optionally substituted alkyl group, an optionally substituted alkenyl group or an optionally substituted alkynyl group; or

R₂ and R₃ may together form a cycloalkyl group;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein R_1 represents a hydrogen atom.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein R_2 and R_3 represent an optionally substituted alkyl group.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the optionally substituted alkyl group is n-butyl, n-pentyl, n-hexyl or n-heptyl group.

12. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the compound represented by formula (1) is 4,6-di-t-butyl-5-hydroxy-2,2-di-n-pentyl-2,3-dihydrobenzofuran.

13. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein a condition in which the amelioration of the vascular tone-regulating function of vascular endothelium is needed is induced by a disease selected from the group consisting of hypertension, diabetes and arteriosclerosis obliterans.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein the condition in which the amelioration of the vascular tone-regulating function of vascular endothelium is needed is intermittent claudication.

Claims 15-21 (cancelled)